Smuggling of antiques and statues

†4317. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that smuggling of antiques and statues is taking place continuously;

(b) whether it is also a fact that antiques and statues are being exported to foreign countries through smuggling;

(c) whether it is also a fact that ASI is not committed towards the presentation and storage of antiques of the country and it is indifferent also towards the same; and

(d) the action being taken by Government to check this loot and smuggling of antiques of the country?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) The availble data does not indicate continuous smuggling and illegal export of antiquities to foreign countries.

(c) and (d) The Archaeological Survey of India is fully committed towards the conservation and safety of the antiquities at the protected monuments as well as the site museums. To ensure their safety, the Archaeological Survey of India engages security guards whose strength has been augmented by deploying private security guards, State police and home guards personnel and also the CISF at selected monuments.

Provisions exist under the antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 for regulation of export in antiquities and art treasures and for prevention of their illicit trafficking such as registration of dealers, registration of specified categories of antiquities, prosecution of offenders etc. The Government is also amending the provisions of the Act to provide additional safety guards against illegal trafficking in antiquities.

Filing of Income Tax

4318. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) how many persons of Ward No. 40(3) of Parliament House, have filed Income Tax returns for the years 2004-05 and 2005-06;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.